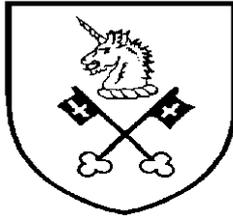


# *Prestbury Parish Council*



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Mr. Adrian Fisher/ Mr. Richard House,  
Cheshire East Council,  
Westfields,  
Middlewich Road,  
Sandbach,  
Cheshire, CW11 1HZ.

Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Dear Mr. Fisher and Mr. House,

## **CONSULTATION ON MACCLESFIELD & POYNTON DRAFT TOWN STRATEGIES**

**Prestbury Parish Council would like to register the strongest objections to both the content of and the modus operandi for the formulation of the Draft Macclesfield and Draft Poynton Town Strategies.**

The Macclesfield Strategy would have serious deleterious impacts on the setting of the town, the landscape around it, sustainability and the quality of life in neighbouring parishes - including Prestbury - whilst failing to deliver a vibrant, regenerated town centre with many new housing units in it. Meanwhile the Poynton Town Strategy demonstrates a disregard for the potential impacts on adjoining parishes if Green Belt land is taken for employment use and for road-building, basically undermining the purpose of the Green Belt. Neither Town Strategy demonstrates a recognition of the requirement by the Regional Spatial Strategy panel that Cheshire should be releasing employment land (not adding to it) for mixed use and for housing. Both Town Strategies appear to have been drawn up with little concern of impacts on the eastern flank of the North Cheshire Green Belt and on surrounding areas.

The Parish Council do not concur with the claims of the Cheshire East Portfolio Holder for Strategic Communities who says in his Foreword to both documents "*Cheshire East has been working closely with local community representatives in the spirit of localism to prepare Town Strategies*". Where we were involved, (following lobbying), in the Macclesfield Town Strategy process, our comments were considered of little value both during the workshops and in response to the unofficial draft of the strategy that was canvassed two days after the second workshop finished. And, in the case of Poynton, our requests to be awarded a seat on the Town Strategy steering group were totally ignored. This was despite us highlighting the fact that we have a common boundary with the BAe site and an interest in road building around Poynton. Both issues have the potential to impact significantly on Prestbury Parish.

## MACCLESFIELD TOWN STRATEGY

### Prestbury Parish Council support:

- D** ✓ Prestbury Parish Council **can** support the potential development area marked ‘D’ (land at Tytherington Business Park), which adjoins Prestbury Parish, being used for housing rather than employment in order to deliver 150 housing units. It is **not** in Green Belt. This would be in keeping with the RSS recommendation that appropriate land be released from employment allocation to mixed use and/or housing.

### Prestbury Parish Council do not support:

- A** **X** Prestbury Parish Council **cannot** support the potential development area marked ‘A’ (land to north of Birtles Road) which adjoins Prestbury Parish. This very rural and productive agricultural land is in Green Belt, disconnected from any services and not served by adequate roads.
- B** **X** Prestbury Parish Council **cannot** support the potential development area marked ‘B’ (land west of Priory Lane) being used for housing. This land, which is within Prestbury Parish, is in Green Belt. In any event, it should be noted that a senior Vice President of Macclesfield Rugby Club who attended the second of the two Macclesfield Town Strategy workshops stated unequivocally that the Rugby Club did **not** have plans to move from its present premises within this area. (This was contrary to the impression given at the first workshop).
- C** **X** Prestbury Parish Council **cannot** support the potential development area marked ‘C’ (land to the north of Prestbury Road) which is an Area of Special County Value (ASCV) as well as designated Green Belt. In any event, if this particular area, which adjoins the Bollin Valley Way, were developed it would join up the southern, built, part of Prestbury with the north west, built, part of Macclesfield in complete contravention of Green Belt purposes.

The remaining identified potential areas for development are neither within nor adjoining Prestbury Parish but we would like to make it clear we do **not** support those in Green Belt.

We **do** support the text on pages 20 and 21 in relation to the town centre but would point to the lack of connection between these fine words about historic assets and encouraging town centre housing provision and the Wilson Bowden town redevelopment planning application.

Under ‘Infrastructure Requirements’ we note that the ‘South West Macclesfield Link Road’ is listed twice, in para. 8.4 (Top Priorities) and in para. 8.5 (Other Infrastructure). We would like it to be noted that, as this ‘distribution’ road - for which no traffic modelling case has ever been made - would mainly capture Green Belt for development, we do not support it.

We would like to see an addition to ‘Infrastructure Requirements’, ie. an aspiration for a network of Quiet Lanes around the town and for Greenways through the town and connecting it to surrounding settlements. This was flagged up by our steering group representative and appears not to have been recorded.

**The Draft Macclesfield Town Strategy is a document we feel unable to support in total for the reasons described above. We believe that, in line with the 1,150 houses p.a. aspiration of the Regional Spatial Strategy, Cheshire East Council should not be aiming to allocate land for more than a total of 23,000 houses across the Borough over the 20 years period of the Local Plan and this maximum target should include permissions already granted. There should also be a brownfield target of 73% and much more should be done to bring back into use the 350 unoccupied houses that exist in Macclesfield.**

## POYNTON TOWN STRATEGY

Whilst Prestbury and Poynton parishes do not have a joint boundary, they share an inter-related interest in two major infrastructure issues – the redevelopment of the British Aerospace site at Woodford (which both Poynton and Prestbury have boundaries with) and road building proposals, (variously: SEMMMS/ the A555 Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road/ the A523 Poynton Bypass/ the Woodford - Poynton Relief Road). Because of this Prestbury Parish Council wrote to Poynton Town Council when the Town Strategy steering group was being established asking for seat. Despite a chase-up phone call, we never received a reply.

### Vision, transport and growth strategies

In the ‘Vision’ statement, Poynton prides itself on its rural setting and its village feel and on being distinct from the nearby Greater Manchester conurbation. This is admirable but it is difficult to see how the rural setting and the distinction between Great Manchester and Poynton can be retained if the SEMMMS roads are completed or how the distinction between Poynton and the Woodford Garden Village could be retained if the Woodford-Poynton Relief Road is delivered, bearing in mind the inevitable infill development these roads would generate regardless of allocated land. Indeed, one way of delivering the new roads would be to enter into PFI agreements and allow Green Belt development along them.

Once allocated, the large tracts of land shown in the Draft Town Strategy for ‘mixed use’ development (especially Area ‘A’) would be bound to lead to Greater Manchester and North East Cheshire settlements connecting up – including, in due course, Adlington and Prestbury.

In addition, the strategy appears to be unrealistically optimistic about the need for more employment areas. Cheshire were told by the RSS panel to reduce their employment land based on the level of previous take-up. There is no evidence to suggest that the situation has changed. Indeed, any pick up in years to come will invariably be slow following a deep recession. It is a puzzle, therefore, as to why Poynton would want to willingly remove large swathes of land from Green Belt on a largely speculative basis. We do not support this.

- A X** Prestbury Parish Council **cannot** support the potential development area marked ‘A’ (land to the west of Poynton) which, it is stated, would be dependent on the construction of a Woodford-Poynton Relief Road.

This very large Green Belt area lies to the west of the West Coast Main Railway Line and west and south of the most westerly built part of Poynton and incorporates a flood plain and agricultural land. It includes a significant slice of the BAe site itself, including areas not previously developed. (The proposal strays significantly into Stockport Borough Council territory). Whilst the stated intention is to keep some land for open space, including playing fields, the concept is to utilise it to deliver up to 1,000 homes in addition to the 950 proposed by the company now tasked with redeveloping the BAe site and to extend the Adlington Industrial Estate.

Prestbury P.C. have objected to the Woodford Garden Village proposals on the basis that they are out of keeping with the surrounding area, they do not make best use of the land and they do not provide sufficient supporting infrastructure or play areas.

**The scale of the aspirations for the area marked ‘A’ in the Draft Poynton Town Strategy are such that, combined with the desire for a new road, they would have significant impacts on a very wide area. It would appear that no consideration has been given to environmental capacity and nor has any exploratory work been done on traffic modelling or carbon emissions. This large scale proposal should not be allowed to progress any further without traffic and environmental appraisals being conducted. Pending this, we object strongly.**

We would like to draw attention to the fact that the proposal coming forward via the Draft Poynton Town Strategy for a new road is out of kilter with the Department for Transport's transport appraisal process (WebTAG). In the first instance there is supposed to be an analysis carried out of perceived problems and, from this, a variety of possible solutions should emerge. These should then be subjected to investigation and, finally, recommendations should emerge. There should be no presumption that road building is an answer to perceived problems or that, if it is, it is the only solution. Prestbury Parish Council cannot, therefore, support the presumption in favour of road building that this strategy represents and urge that it is not taken forward in its present form. Certainly not without the appropriate investigations, including a strategic environmental appraisal, being carried out.

**In conclusion, we believe that Cheshire East Council (CEC) would remove many of the pressures to build on the Green Belt if it confined its housebuilding aspirations to no more than the figures which the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) panel endorsed. In their 'Issues and Options' consultation of 2010, CEC described the RSS housebuilding figures as representing 'Low Growth'. This was misleading as those figures were discussed in terms of 'High Growth' throughout the RSS process. However, according to the RSS panel, if the agreed housebuilding figures (of 1,150 p.a.) were adhered to, there should be no need for any strategic review of the Green Belt. We urge CEC**

- **not to press ahead with a Green Belt review**
- **to release more employment land for mixed uses and housebuilding as instructed by the RSS panel**
- **to aim for a brownfield building target of 73%, which is equivalent to the average agreed across Macclesfield, Congleton and Crewe and Nantwich Borough as part of the RSS process**
- **to retain a special local designation for landscapes (similar to Cheshire County Council's 'Areas of Special County Value) and**
- **to carry forward relevant Supplementary Planning Documents**

Yours sincerely

Prestbury Parish Council